

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-09 ISO-00 FEA-01 ERDA-07 AID-05

CEA-01 CIAE-00 COME-00 EPG-02 DODE-00 EB-07

FPC-01 H-02 INR-07 INT-05 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05

OMB-01 PM-04 USIA-15 OES-07 SP-02 SS-15 STR-04

TRSE-00 ACDA-10 PA-02 PRS-01 /139 W

-----004934 300904Z /10

R 300645Z JUN 77

FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4743

INFO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY VIENNA

AMEMBASSY ROME

UNCLAS KHARTOUM 2174

DEPARTMENT PLS PASS INTERIOR FOR USGS AND COMMERCE FOR MEPD

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EMIN, ENRG, SU

SUBJECT: URANIUM EXPLORATION--NEW PROPOSALS AND OPPORTUNITIES

REF: KHARTOUM A-87

1. AMERICAN MINERAL FIRMS SHOULD INVESTIGATE DESIRABILITY OF URANIUM EXPLORATION IN SUDAN. THOUGH MUCH OF SUDAN RELATIVELY GEOLOGICALLY UNKNOWN, NUMBER OF FOREIGN AND AMERICAN COMPANIES INTERESTED IN SUDANESE URANIUM. DIRECTOR OF SUDAN'S GEOLOGICAL AND MINERAL RESOURCES DEPARTMENT (GMRD) HAS TOLD ECONOFF THAT SUDAN WILLING TO GRANT EXPLORATION PERMITS FOR ALL AREAS OF SUDAN EXCEPT THAT PORTION IN WESTERN SUDAN WHERE AGIP HAS BEEN ACTIVE.

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2. AGIP APPARENTLY HAS BEEN SUCCESSFUL IN ITS URANIUM EXPLORATION ACTIVITIES IN SOUTHERN DARFUR AND BAHR EL GHAZAL PROVINCES IN VICINITY OF HOFRAT EN NAHAS. URANIUM ORES IN THAT LOCALITY ARE APPARENTLY MIXED WITH COPPER DEPOSITS. CU DEPOSIT CONTAINS 10 MILLION TONS OF 2-4 PERCENT COPPER. THESE COPPER RESERVES HAD NOT BEEN DEVELOPED BECAUSE OF THEIR REMOTE

LOCATION AND CONSEQUENT TRANSPORTATION DIFFICULTIES. AGIP SUBMITTED PROPOSAL FOR THEIR DEVELOPMENT IN APRIL. IN MAY, SUDAN SUBMITTED COUNTER PROPOSAL FOR JOINT VENTURE WHICH WOULD INCLUDE 100-150 MILLION US DOLLAR COPPER SMELTER. AGIP'S REPLY TO THIS COUNTER PROPOSAL HAS NOT BEEN RECEIVED. IF NEGOTIATIONS BETWEEN SUDAN AND AGIP BREAK DOWN, US MINERAL DEVELOPMENT FIRMS MIGHT HAVE OPPORTUNITY TO INVESTIGATE THIS AREA.

3. SEVERAL AMERICAN FIRMS HAVE EXPRESSED INTEREST IN SUDANESE URANIUM, INCLUDING WESTINGHOUSE AND US STEEL. SUBSIDIARY OF LATTER CORPORATION, ESSEX MINERALS, IS PLANNING TO OPEN KHARTOUM OFFICE PRIMARILY TO FOLLOW URANIUM DEVELOPMENTS. ANOTHER FIRM, CARBON AND MINERALS, HAS HAD EXPLORATION PERMITS FOR URANIUM WHICH HAVE EXPIRED. GMRD REFUSED EXTENSION VALIDITY FOR EXPLORATION PERMIT BECAUSE OF LACK OF ACTIVITY.

4. COMMENT: ADDRESSEES MAY BE INTERESTED IN SUDAN URANIUM POTENTIAL IN LIGHT RECENT PUBLICITY REGARDING URANIUM CARTEL INVOLVING SOME COMPANIES HEADQUARTERED IN ADDRESSEE CAPITALS. BOGOSIAN

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